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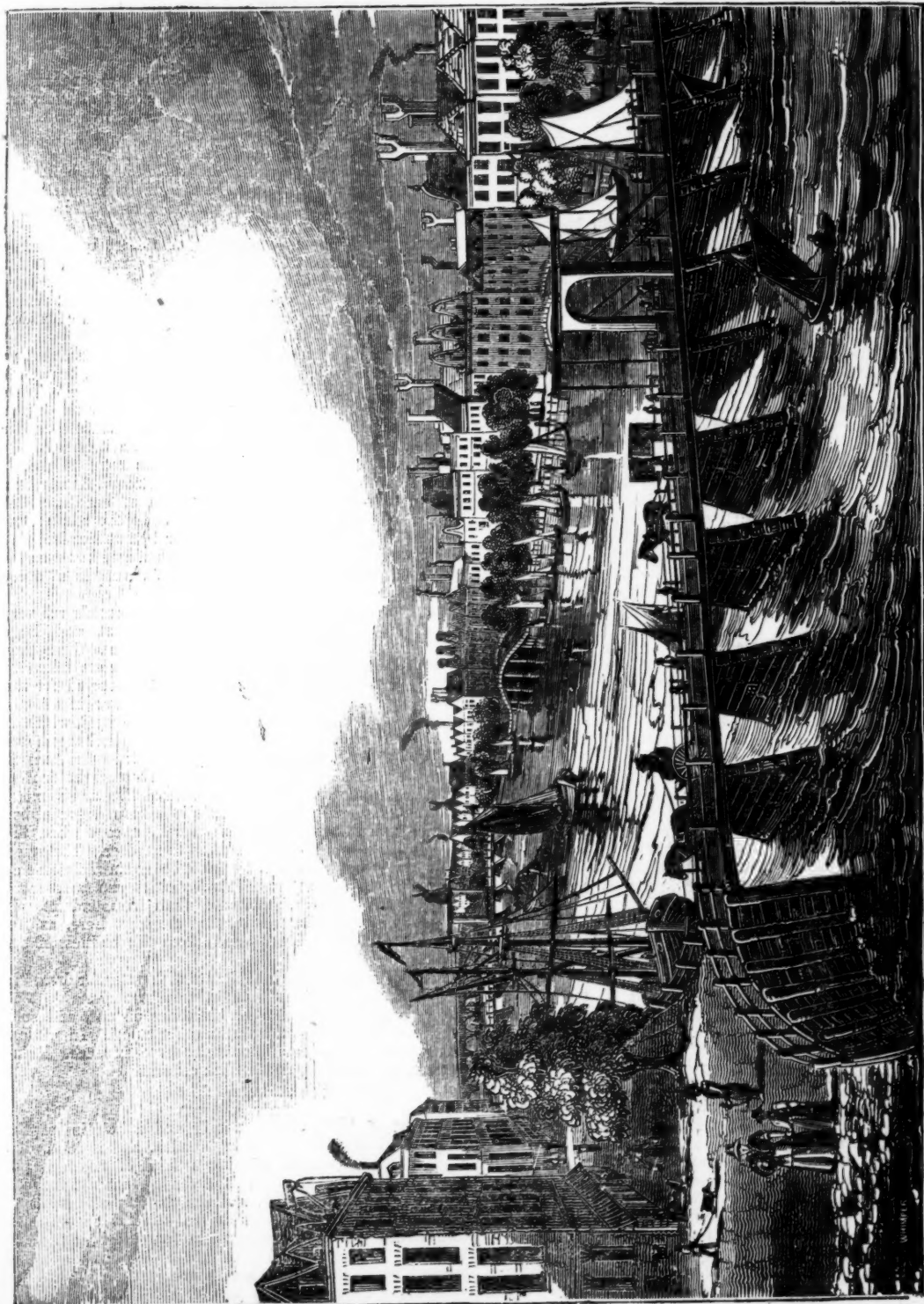
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THE CITY OF AMSTERDAM.

## SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF AMSTERDAM,

AMSTERDAM, the capital of Holland, and one of the chief commercial cities of Europe, is situated at the mouth of the river Amstel, where it falls into the Y, an arm of the Zuyder Zee, or Southern Sea. From this it is separated by a bar, the only passage through which is a channel called the Pampus. The Amstel is formed by the junction of the Drecht and the Meyert, two rivulets, which meet near the village of Uithoorn, a few miles from Amsterdam, and in its progress towards the city is several feet above the level of the adjacent country, its waters being restrained by strong embankments.

## HISTORY.

Nothing certain is known of the history of Amsterdam, further back than the thirteenth century, when the Lords of Amstel possessed a castle at the mouth of the river, around which fishermen erected their huts. In course of time the huts increased to a village, which was called Amstels Vosten, or the fort of the Amstel, because a fort was erected to defend it. Towards the end of the thirteenth century it was destroyed by fire, and shortly afterwards rebuilt.

A new dyke was constructed along both banks of the Amstel, as far as its mouth; a second along the Y, to the spot now occupied by the Water-Bridge, or Damrak, called Paapenbrug, and to this latter was added a sluice-gate, called, in the language of the country, a dam. In a short time, Amstels Vosten assumed the character of a town, and received the name of Amstelsdam, or Amsterdam.

Until the year 1490, however, it was surrounded merely by a weak palisade. At this time it was encompassed by a wall of brick, constructed by order of Mary of Burgundy, in order to defend it from the incursions of the inhabitants of Utrecht, who were frequently quarrelling with the Hollanders; but it was soon after reduced to ashes. The people of Guelderland besieged it in 1512; but, not succeeding in their attempts to take it, they set fire to the ships in the harbour. In 1525 the town-house of Amsterdam was attacked by a party of wild enthusiasts, under an Anabaptist leader; but they were defeated by the citizens, and most of them were cut to pieces. Tumults of a similar kind were renewed by persons of the same description in 1535. The deputies of John of Leyden, who asserted that God had made him a present of the Cities of Amsterdam, Devinter, and Wesel, assembled twelve of their associates at midnight, five of whom were women, and running, madly, at the head of them, into the streets, exclaimed, "Woe, woe; the wrath of God; woe to Babylon." This outrage was soon quelled, but was followed by a regular and deep-laid conspiracy against the magistrates of Amsterdam, with a design to wrest the government of the city out of their hands. Van Geelen, the head of these insurgents, marched his fanatical troop to the town-house, on the day appointed, with drums beating and colours flying, and there fixed his head quarters. He was attacked by the burghers, assisted by regular troops, and headed by several of the burgomasters of the city; and, after an obstinate resistance, he was surrounded, with his whole troop, and they were put to death in the severest and most dreadful manner. In 1578 Amsterdam was besieged by the Hollanders, and, after a resistance of ten months, capitulated.

During the sixteenth century Amsterdam became a place of considerable commerce, particularly with the Baltic, and obtained the greater part of the trade of Antwerp, after that town had fallen a second time under the dominion of the Spaniards. In 1585 the western, or new part of the city, was built, and new accessions were made in 1593, 1612, and 1658. In 1622 it contained 100,000 inhabitants. During the eighteenth century it acquired so much wealth, that it surpassed every other city in Europe. It was the great mart for all the productions of the east and west, and its harbour was always crowded with ships; but, after the change of government in 1795, and the forced alliance of Holland with France, its trade and wealth continually diminished. The revolution, however, of 1813, restored the business of Amsterdam, which has increased very considerably since that time.

## SITUATION AND EXTENT.

AMSTERDAM is built in the form of a crescent, the inward curved line and two horns of which extend along the Y,

and is nine miles and a half in circumference. It covers a space of about 900 acres, and is surrounded by a ditch, about eighty feet wide, bordered by a row of trees. The ramparts have been pulled down, but there are still remaining twenty-six bastions which formerly defended the walls, and these have been converted into mills for grinding corn, and other purposes. There are eight handsome stone gates, several of which bear the name of the towns to which the respective roads lead, namely, the Leyden-Gate, the Utrecht-Gate, the Haerlem-Gate, &c. The number of houses amounts to 26,400, and of the inhabitants to 180,000, about 17,000 of whom are Jews. In 1785 the inhabitants are said to have amounted to 230,000, and in 1812 to 200,000.

The greater part of the inhabitants are engaged in trade, and but few in manufactures, except of every-day consumption. Many of the poorer classes live in cellars under the houses of the rich, and others in apartments erected on the decks of their trading vessels.

The soil is so marshy, that the whole town is built upon piles, which are driven into the mud by means of machinery, and on which are laid strong planks of oak. As each of these piles is thirty or forty feet long, some idea may be formed of the immense quantity of timber employed in the construction of this city. It was in reference to the forest foundations of this wonderful place, that the celebrated Erasmus sportively observed, when he first visited it, that he had reached a city, the inhabitants of which, like crows, lived at the tops of trees.

The Amstel divides the town into two parts; that on the east side called Oude Zyde, the old side, because it was the first occupied, and that on the west, called the Nieuwe Zyde, the new side. Having reached the centre of the town, it takes the name of Rokin, and flows under this name to the Exchange, beneath which it passes. In the remainder of its course through the town to the Y, it is called the Damrak. Besides this stream, Amsterdam is intersected by an immense number of canals, which branch off from the Amstel, and divide the whole town into small islands, connected together by two hundred and ninety bridges of wood or stone, which are, however, so contrived, as to allow a free passage for vessels of every description.

In a commercial point of view, these canals are very convenient; but the water being stagnant, and large quantities of filth being constantly thrown into them, they would soon become a nuisance, were not means taken for cleansing them. Mills are therefore constructed for the express purpose of giving motion to the water in a few of the principal canals, and drawing up the mud, which is sold as manure. The stagnant water is discharged into the Y, and fresh supplies are introduced from the Amstel. The water of these canals is generally about eight or nine feet deep, and the mud at the bottom five or six more. The surface usually presents an olive-coloured green, but seldom emits any disagreeable smell, except when the vessels are moved from one station to another. The smell is then very unpleasant, but cannot be so unwholesome as some persons have supposed, for few cities can boast more robust and healthy inhabitants than Amsterdam. It is said, however, that no cavalry are kept here, as the horses become ill, it is supposed, from the badness of the water.

For the supply of the inhabitants with water for domestic purposes, the article is brought from the river Vegt at Weesp, a small town five or six miles distant, and sold in the streets at about a farthing for a pail. In winter, however, the price sometimes increases to sixpence. Rain-water is also carefully collected in cisterns.

## THE PORT.

THE port of Amsterdam is a mile and a half in length, and above a thousand paces in breadth, and is filled with a multitude of vessels, forming a kind of floating city. Towards the Y, the town is defended against the encroachments of the water, and the drifting of masses of ice, by a double row of piles driven into the ground, and connected together by horizontal beams, called boomen, or barriers. Between these piles are twenty-one openings, through which the ships pass in and out, and which are shut every evening at the ringing of a bell, so that no vessel can arrive at, or depart from the quay. In the

summer the port-bell is rung about ten o'clock, and in winter at half-past four. There is a sort of basin outside the barriers, called the Laag, in which the heavy ships lie. The breadth of the Y, between the city and the opposite shore, is about a mile and a half.

On the quay adjoining the port, is the Herring-Tower, at which the merchants concerned in the herring-fishery hold their meetings, and keep their accounts. On the return of the boats from the fishery, it is one of the busiest scenes in Amsterdam. The commencement of the season is hailed with every demonstration of joy, and the same kind of emblems are exhibited as at a general festival in England. At every house where pickled herrings are sold, an ornamented garland is hung over the door, composed of box-leaves or branches, intermixed with gilt or lacquered paper. The fish are cured as soon as they are caught, and the first that are brought to market, are sold at sixpence, and even a shilling a piece. So important has this fishery always been considered, that the first draught of herrings is always presented to the King; and opulent families have been known, in former times, to give seven shillings, and even a guinea, for the first herrings exposed to sale. The superior manner in which the Dutch pickle and preserve herrings, is said to be peculiar to themselves.

On the quay also is another tower, called the Scraershoek Toor, or Tower of Mourners, as it stands on the spot where the wives and children of seamen were accustomed to take leave of their husbands and fathers embarking on foreign voyages. It is now an office connected with the port.

The New Canal, extending from Bucksloot, which is exactly opposite Amsterdam, to the Helder, is of great advantage to the city, as it obviates the necessity of large vessels unloading before they enter the harbour, and encountering the passage through the Zuyder Zee, which was peculiarly difficult with contrary winds. This canal, which is fifty miles and a half long, one hundred and twenty-four feet in breadth at the surface, thirty-six at the bottom, and twenty-one feet in depth, was begun in 1819, and finished in 1825, at an expense of about £750,000. Like the Dutch canals generally, its level is that of the high tides of the sea, from which it receives its supply of water. The canal is wide enough to admit of one frigate passing another. The time occupied in tracking a vessel from Amsterdam, is eighteen hours.

#### STREETS, &c.

AMSTERDAM has no noble squares, like those which add so much to the splendour of London, nor is there any bridge worthy of being noticed, except that over the river Amstel, which is built of brick and stone, is six hundred feet in length, seventy in breadth, and is tolerably handsome. It is called the Lover's Bridge, and commands a good view of the city on one side, and the adjacent polders on the other. This is the bridge seen in the back-ground of the view of Amsterdam given in the first page.

Many of the streets of Amsterdam are narrow, but others are remarkably spacious, and have a magnificent appearance; such as the *Heeren-Graft*, (Lord-Street,) the *Keyser's-Graft*, (King-Street,) and the *Prinses-Graft*, (Prince's-Street,) which are upwards of a hundred and forty feet in width, and following the crescent shape of the town, are each about two miles in length. All the streets are remarkable for their cleanliness, and are very neatly paved, chiefly with brick, but there is no separate path for pedestrians. In most of them, a canal runs along the centre, bordered on each side by a row of noble elm, oak, or linden trees. The principal shops are in the *Kalver's-sstraat*, and the *Warmoes-sstraat*, which are usually thronged with passengers.

#### HOUSES, AND MODE OF BUILDING.

Most of the houses are built of brick, and almost all are approached by flights of steps. They are generally lofty, and pointed at the top, the gable-end being towards the street. In some parts of the town they are constructed with double fronts, one towards the street, and the other towards a canal. Some of them have stone-fronts, with balconies and columns in the Italian style, but many, of even the best houses, are disfigured by transforming the centre windows of the upper story into doors, through which merchandise of every description is drawn by a crane, fixed at the top of the house, the inhabitants, however wealthy, being always disposed to trade. The chimneys

of many of the houses are surmounted, not with circular pots, but with square wooden frames, consisting of four small posts, capped with a horizontal board, and open on every side. When built of brick, they are usually formed in the shape of a Y. Many of the houses, except in the centre of the town, have gardens. The apartments are generally ornamented with taste, very much in the French style, and the walls are frequently painted with a series of landscapes in oil-colours, instead of being hung with paper, or stuccoed.

All the principal dwellings have a profusion of windows of large plate-glass, but this is more for the sake of ornament than light, for the Dutch are so fond of retirement, that the blinds on the inside are seldom drawn up. In order to indulge their love of seclusion, small mirrors are projected from the side of the window into the street, so as to command a view of the passengers, and save the observer, who sits behind a curtain in the room, the trouble of rising or looking down to see what is passing. In many instances, also, another mirror is fixed, so as to show who is coming to the doors, and thus give notice of the approach of an unwelcome visitor.

The mode of building houses in Holland, is very different from that pursued in this country. Instead of beginning at the foundation, they commence at the top, and build downwards. The large beams intended to support the roof and attic, are made to rest in the party-walls of the adjoining houses; on these beams, a studded wooden frame is erected, to sustain the roof and flooring. In this state, the attic is often seen hanging for a considerable time before the other parts of the building are commenced. One advantage of this method is, that the lower part is kept dry, and the workmen can at all times proceed with their labours, regardless of the weather. The lower part of the house also consists of stud-work, strongly framed together, and contracts in its descent to the foundation, which rests upon piles driven into the mud. From this circumstance, many of the houses lean towards the street, and some of them are several feet out of the perpendicular, particularly at the corners of the streets, where they are still more contracted, to allow greater room to the passengers. The panels of the frames are filled up with brick-work, but nearly the whole stress is upon the frame-work. The same method of building is pursued in some parts of Belgium.

In order that the foundations of the houses may not be disturbed by the rolling along the streets of wheel-carriages, these vehicles are, by law, limited to a certain number, which is very small compared with the size of the city. A carriage called by the Dutch a *sley*, is used in their room; it is the body of a coach fixed upon a sledge, and drawn by one horse; the driver walks by the side of it, which he holds with one hand to prevent its falling over, and with the other the reins. It holds four persons, and moves at the rate of about three miles an hour. This mode of conveyance is rendered necessary, by the steep ascent of the draw-bridges over the canals, where it would be unsafe to use a wheel-carriage, for if it ran back in the act of passing over, the whole would fall into the water. In the winter it is also convenient, as the sley glides over the ice and snow, which would obstruct an ordinary carriage. One of these carriages is represented in the view, crossing the bridge.

#### PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

AMONGST the public buildings of Amsterdam, the Royal Palace, formerly the Town Hall or *Stadhuis*, holds the first place. It is unquestionably a wonderful edifice, considering that Holland furnishes no stone, and that the foundation of the building, like that of all others in Amsterdam, was boggy; the latter circumstance rendered it necessary to have an artificial foundation of extraordinary construction and magnitude, and accordingly it rests upon thirteen thousand six hundred and ninety-five massy trees or piles, the first of which was driven on the 20th of January, 1648, and the last on the 6th of October following, when the first stone, with a suitable inscription, was laid; and, seven years afterwards, the different colleges of magistrates took formal possession of the apartments allotted for their respective offices, but at this time the roof and dome were not completed; the expense of this mighty edifice amounted to two millions sterling. The whole of the building, with the exception of the ground-floor, which is of brick, is of free-stone. The principal architect was John Van Kampen, who





THE ROYAL PALACE AT AMSTERDAM.

acted under the control of four burgomasters. The area in which it stands is spacious, and is called the Dam. The form of the building is square, its front is two hundred and eighty-two feet, its depth two hundred and fifty-five, and its height one hundred and sixteen, exclusive of the tower, which is sixty-seven feet.

The front of the Palace has seven small doorways, which were intended for the representatives of the Seven United Provinces; but the front entrance is now reserved for the members of the Royal Family, and the back appropriated to the ministers, public officers, and visitors. The want of a grand entrance is a great architectural defect, which immediately excites the surprise of the traveller; but it was so constructed, from the wary precautionary foresight of the magistrates, who had the superintendence of the building, for the purpose of preventing free access to a mob, in case of tumult.

Each front has a projecting portion in the centre, and at the angles of the building are pavilions surmounted by eagles of gilt bronze, and imperial crowns, which were presented to the city by Maximilian, emperor of Germany. On the façade, and ranged along the second story, there are thirty pilasters of the composite order, each thirty-six feet in height; a second range, of the Corinthian order, forms a third story, supporting the entablature, out of which rises a pediment, adorned with sculpture; and on the cornice are figures of Peace, Prudence, and Justice. The pediment at the back is also sculptured, and on the cornice are figures of Strength, Temperance, and Vigilance. On the top of the building is a cupola and dome, terminated by a vane in the form of a ship, the ancient arms of the town.

The principal hall in the Palace is a splendid apartment, one hundred and fifty-two feet long, sixty broad, and one hundred high. The walls are entirely composed of white marble, and are hung with trophies and standards taken by the Dutch. The bronze gates and railing which form the grand entrance are massive, but beautifully executed: over this entrance is a colonnade of Corinthian pillars of red and white marble. At one end is a colossal figure of Atlas, attended by Vigilance and Wisdom. The roof is painted with allegorical figures; and upon the floor, the celestial and terrestrial globes are delineated in brass and various coloured marbles, arranged in three large circles, twenty-two feet diameter. On the ground-floor of the palace were formerly deposited the vast treasures of the Bank of Amsterdam, which, at one period of the city's commercial prosperity, are said to have amounted to 40,000,000*l.* sterling of the precious metals. This building also formerly contained prisons, both for criminals and debtors, but these have been transferred to more suitable situations.

The prospect from the tower, or dome, is very extensive, commanding the whole of the city and its environs, crowded with windmills, the river Y, filled with ships, the Zuyder Zee, the Amstel, the Haarlem Lake, and the Arsenal. The tower contains a vast number of bells, the largest of which

weighs between six and seven thousand pounds; the carillons in this dome are remarkably sweet. The brass barrel by which the airs are played, is seven feet and a half in diameter, and weighs four thousand four hundred and seventy-four pounds. The clock strikes the full hour at the half-hour, and upon the expiration of the full hour, repeats it upon a bell of a deeper tone. This, indeed, is the case with many of the clocks in Holland, and has frequently led travellers, unacquainted with the circumstance, into error.

When Louis Buonaparte was created King of Holland, in 1808, he took possession of this building as his palace, and the civil and municipal authorities, who then occupied it, were removed to a building in the vicinity, which was once a convent, but had been converted at the Reformation into the Prince's Hotel, and afterwards became the Admiralty.

The Exchange, which was built between 1608 and 1613, but enlarged in 1668, is situated at the end of the Rokin, and rests upon five arches, through which the Amstel flows into the Damrak. It is a quadrangular building of free-stone, two hundred and fifty feet long, and one hundred and forty wide, consisting of an open square surrounded by galleries, beneath which the merchants assemble. The galleries are supported by marble columns, each being numbered, and appropriated to some particular class of traders. The upper part of the Exchange is occupied by the treasury, and the cellars on both sides are inhabited. In one part of the building is an inscription, recording the visit of the Emperor Alexander in 1814. Although the commerce of Amsterdam is not so extensive as in former times, yet it is still important; and at 3 o'clock every day, the Exchange presents a bustling scene.

The Corn Exchange, situated on the Damrak, is a building of free-stone, erected in 1766. It is a covered gallery, forming three sides of a square, the fourth, towards the street, being enclosed by an iron railing.

The Dock-yard is one of the most remarkable objects in Amsterdam. It is situated on the island of Kattenburg, and has the advantage of a large basin communicating with the Y. There are five slips for building ships of the line, four for the largest class of frigates, and twelve for smaller vessels.

The Arsenal, adjoining the Dock-yard, is a fine building, erected in 1665. It is 220 feet in length, and 200 in breadth, and is adorned with sculpture, emblematical of navigation. At the top of the building is a reservoir, capable of holding sixteen hundred tons of water, which, in case of fire, may be distributed through all parts of the edifice. The number of workmen employed here, is about 1500.

The Naval School is near the Arsenal. It enjoys considerable funds, by means of which, the children of common sailors, properly recommended, are educated gratuitously, while the sons of officers are admitted on payment of a small sum monthly. In the yard is a vessel completely rigged, on which the boys are exercised.

Another large building, situated near the Muyden Gate,



THE EXCHANGE AT AMSTERDAM.

is the Barrack of St. Charles, capable of containing nearly 3,000 men. It was erected in 1800.

The Workhouse of Amsterdam, situated in the east part of the city, has long been celebrated for its excellent management. It is partly correctional and partly charitable, and while it affords a comfortable refuge to the poor, is an admirable school for the reformation of offenders. The building is three hundred and sixty feet in length, and one hundred and eighty in breadth, and is capable of accommodating nearly a thousand inmates. In the rooms belonging to the governors and directresses, are some exquisite pictures by Vandyke, Rembrandt, and Jordaens. Some of the offences for which persons are occasionally confined in the workhouse, are not such as are usually cognizable by English law: for instance, husbands may, upon complaint of extravagance or drunkenness, duly proved, send their wives to be confined and receive the discipline of the house; and wives their husbands, for two, three, and four years together. In one part of the building, never shown to strangers, young ladies of good family are confined, by order of their parents or friends, for undutiful deportment.

The Rasp House, or House of Correction, where criminals, whose offence is not of a capital nature, are confined, is another establishment worthy of notice. The interior is an oblong square, on three sides of which are the cells of the prisoners, and on the fourth side, the warehouses containing the piles of wood, which are given to the prisoners as their daily task. Some are employed in cutting the wood, and others, in rasping it for the use of the dyers. In a corner of the court-yard is a cell, so contrived, that if the person placed in it do not continue to pump, he will be drowned. It has not, however, been used for many years.

The law in Holland is by no means sanguinary, and few crimes are punishable with death; but it is clearly defined, and the penalty strictly enforced. Its object is to reform, not to destroy. Those who violate the rights of society are subject to imprisonment from two to twenty years, and are compelled, by hard labour, to contribute to the revenue of the state.

#### CHURCHES.

AMSTERDAM contains ten Reformed Dutch churches, a French Reformed church, an English Presbyterian church, twenty-two Roman Catholic churches, a Walloon church, three Lutheran churches, a Greek or Russian church, and several synagogues, but none of these buildings are distinguished by much architectural beauty.

The New Church, so called, although it has been built two or three centuries, is one of the principal. It is situated on the Dam, near the Palace, and is said to have been erected in imitation of the cathedral at Amiens. It is upwards of three hundred feet in length, more than two hundred in breadth, and is lighted by seventy-five large windows. It contains the splendid monument erected by the government, in honour of Admiral Ruyter, the celebrated admiral who was wounded at Messina in 1676,

and died shortly afterwards at Aosta. Over the entrance to the tomb is inscribed, "*Intaminatis fulget honoribus.*" *He shines with untarnished honours.* There are also monuments in honour of Admiral Bentinck, who died in 1781, at the battle of the Dogger Bank, of Admiral Kensbergen, and the Dutch poet Vondel. The pulpit is of acacia-wood curiously carved, with representations of the Four Evangelists and the Christian Virtues; and the organ has been much extolled on account of its size and powers of execution.

The Old Church, in the Warmoes-sstraat, dedicated to St. Nicholas, also contains several monuments, amongst which are those of Admiral Janz Sweers, Vander Hulst, Vander Zaan, Heemskirk, and Marshal Wirtz. Three large painted windows in this church are much admired; they represent the Salutation of the Virgin, the Virgin visited by her cousin Elizabeth, and the Virgin dying. Two of these windows are said to have been the gift of a wealthy burgomaster, named Claas Van Sloppen. He was accused of heresy, and of favouring the new or reformed religion. The priests and his confessor threatened him with excommunication, unless he recanted, and immediately undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, to obtain absolution from the pope, who had, no doubt, previously been made acquainted with his wealthy circumstances, and also that he was a *bon vivant*. The penance imposed by his holiness was, that he should make a present of two painted-glass windows to the church of St. Nicholas, and that, for one whole year, he should drink nothing but water. The expense of the glass windows was but a trifle to a man of his great wealth; but, never having been a water-drinker, he felt convinced of his inability to perform that part of the punishment. He therefore begged for a second audience, at which he acquainted his holiness, that the water of Amsterdam was so unwholesome, that nobody drank it plain; and all he requested, was to be permitted to add a few grains of corn to correct its impurities, or he feared he should die before the windows were finished. The pope assented to this reasonable request, and Van Hoppen took good care to malt his water well. The Old Church is two hundred and forty-nine feet in length, two hundred and twenty-five feet at its greatest breadth, and six hundred and forty feet in circumference.

"In Holland clergymen are familiarly, but as a term of respect, called *Domini*. They are easily recognised by their court-looking dress and cocked hat. In the pulpit, instead of a gown, they use a long *mantel*, which consists of black cloth, only six inches broad, edged with silk, and fastened with a hook to the collar of the coat. Originally this mantle, from the numerous plaits of which it is composed, must have been sufficient to envelop the person, but probably, has gradually been reduced, to give more liberty to the speaker. Few of the clergy preach from memory. They generally read their discourses; and sometimes, though rarely, their prayers. They are held in the greatest respect by the Dutch. In general, they are certainly exemplary and zealous in the discharge of their sacred functions. And like the people at large, are

distinguished for loyalty and strong attachment to their father-land\*."

The appearance of the congregation in a Dutch church is singular. Considerable time and labour are requisite in preparing for the worshippers, and, in a large church, many attendants are employed. Almost all the females are accustomed to keep their feet warm, by placing them on a *chauffe-pied*, or little pot with burning turf, the lid of which is perforated to diffuse the heat. The women sit by themselves in the body of the church, and the men in oak-pews along the aisles, and, in cold weather, they also require the *chauffe-pied*. The women never alter their position after they are once seated, but, during the prayers, put a fan before the face. The men sit covered, except during prayer, when they rise and take off their hats. The dress of the females, generally consisting of a mob-cap, a print-gown, and a satin-apron, is so uniform, that little distinction of rank is visible to an ordinary observer. They usually come to church without either bonnet or cloak, and even if it rain, walk through the shower with the calmest indifference.

The dress of the children in the Orphan School of Amsterdam is very singular; the coats, or jackets, of the boys are divided lengthways, one-half being of red and the other black. The girls are dressed in woollen gowns and aprons, with a white square linen cap, pinned close to the head in a peculiar form.

The Beguines† possess an institution in Amsterdam. These ladies reside in a large isolated building, contiguous to which is a church, and numerous inferior offices appropriated to their order, the whole being surrounded by a wall and ditch. Any female may enter into this society, being unmarried, or without children, upon a certificate of good character, and of her having an adequate income for her support. Each sister is required to attend stated prayers, and to be within the walls at a given hour at night; she has a small flower-garden devoted to her use; she is not distinguished by any dress, is free to pursue her own former habits during the day, and may marry from, or leave the establishment, when she pleases.

#### BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND BURIALS.

ALL births in Amsterdam, as well as in other Dutch towns, are registered by the police; and the parents of a child are subject to a penalty if they do not give notice of its birth, within three days, to the nearest magistrate or burgomaster. They then receive a copy of the register, which authorizes any minister to baptize the child if required, but if he should do so without this document, he is liable to a penalty.

Marriage, in Holland, is a civil contract, entered into before the magistrate, notice having been previously given of the intention of the parties; they then attend with two or three friends as witnesses, and the magistrate's clerk reads over the marriage-contract, to which they give their assent by signing their names. Sometimes a religious service takes place afterwards in the church, but this is not essential to the validity of the contract. Upon the celebration of marriage amongst the genteeler classes, it is the custom for the bride and bridegroom to send each a bottle of wine, generally fine hock, spiced and sugared, and decorated with all sorts of ribands, to the house of every acquaintance, a custom which is frequently very expensive.

The manner of performing burials is remarkable. On the decease of any person, immediate notice must be given to the magistrate, who employs an officer, called the *aanspreker*, or announcer, to ascertain the fact, and to make a public announcement of it. This person acts as a sort of crier, and is singularly dressed, wearing a long mourning cloak, a large three-cornered hat, with crape hanging from one of its corners, a pair of large clerical bands in front, and a long scarf streaming behind from the collar of his coat. In this costume he calls at every door in the neighbourhood, and reads from a paper the name, age, and other particulars of the deceased. If the person be of wealth or consequence, several of these officers are employed, in order to give a wider circulation to the intelligence.

Preparations are then made for the funeral, which is left almost entirely to the undertaker and the *aanspreker*, the relatives generally retiring from the scene. There is no

passing-bell, no religious ceremony, and seldom any funeral procession, unless the following may be so called. The body is put into an oak coffin, and placed upon a car, somewhat like a hearse, but open on the sides, so that the coffin may be distinctly seen. The car is drawn by a pair of horses; the *aanspreker* walks before it, followed by the undertaker and his assistant, and the official mourner, who is dressed in a mourning cloak, bands, and scarf, with a large flat hat, several feet in circumference, and a wig of dishevelled hair hanging down to the waist. Sometimes, but rarely, a mourning coach follows the car, containing an individual, as the representative of the family.

In this way the body is conveyed to the Kerk-hof or burial place. This is a yard usually adjoining the church, surrounded by a wall to the height of twelve or fourteen feet. The coffins are placed in rows, one above another, till they are nearly level with the top of the wall; a little sand is then spread over them, and the hof is closed till the bodies are sufficiently decayed to be removed. The process is hastened by exposure to the atmosphere, but the nuisance to the neighbourhood is intolerable. When Holland was in possession of the French, an attempt was made to do away with some of these disgusting cemeteries, and to provide more suitable places for the reception of the dead; but the burgomasters pleaded the expense, as the soil being so marshy, it would require immense quantities of sand, to make it solid enough for the purposes of interment, and strong embankments to protect it from the floods; and ultimately succeeded in maintaining the old method. When the hof has remained closed several years, while another has been filling, it is again opened; the coffins are broken up, and the fragments tied up and sold as firewood; the furniture is collected and sold to dealers in old iron; the remaining bones are wheeled away in barrows, and thrown into a vault beneath the church; and the rest is sold to farmers for manure. The hof is then swept out, and ready to receive new inmates.

#### MUSEUM, &c.

AMSTERDAM possesses a splendid Museum of Pictures, which is deposited in a building called the Trippenhuis, from the name of the original owner which was Trip. It was first formed in 1798, and has been gradually increasing to the present time. It is a singular circumstance, that this is almost the only fine collection in Europe, which was not removed to Paris by Buonaparte.

"The Museum," says a modern tourist\*, "is a good building, containing, on two floors, seven or eight rooms, well filled with nearly five hundred pictures, chiefly of the Dutch and Flemish schools, and many of them among the finest specimens of the several masters. Some of the best were removed from the Stadthuis when it became the palace; and to these were added others that were purchased, at the public expense, from private collections. A very few only can be noticed here. There are five pictures of Gerard Dow, all of them good, but two, in particular, are eminently beautiful. The one is a large picture of a school by candle-light. The other is a cavalier, and a richly-dressed lady, under the shade of a thick wood, highly and beautifully finished. There are three pictures of Van Dyke, but none in his best manner. A magnificent picture of B. Van der Helst, which Sir Joshua Reynolds pronounced to be, and few will dispute the propriety of his taste, superior to another large picture of Rembrandt, in the same collection, and so it is considered by the artists of Holland. It represents a feast given by the officers of a company of the civic guard of Amsterdam, commanded by Captain Witts, to the Spanish ambassador, in commemoration of the peace concluded at Münster in 1648. Another picture of Vander Helst, representing a party of cross-bowmen, is fine, but every way inferior to the preceding. A very large picture of Paul Potter, representing a mountainous landscape, in the fore-ground of which is a boar defending itself against the attack of some dogs, urged by a hunter on horseback, accompanied by another on foot, while on the right of the picture, a young bear is seen clambering up a tree, with a dog springing after it. Another specimen of Paul Potter, is a rich landscape, well filled with oxen, goats, sheep, asses, &c. There are four pictures of Rembrandt, the most remarkable of which is that well known under the name of the *Night Watch*, which, if we may believe the Dutch, who ought to know, and the descriptive catalogue, is entirely a misnomer. It represents the

\* STEVEN'S History of the Church at Rotterdam.

† A religious order of females. The word is said by some to be derived from St. Begge, Duchess of Brabant, who lived in the seventh century, and was famous for her piety.

\* Tour through South Holland.



departure of a Captain Kok, with his officers and arquebusiers, to fire at a mark. Rubens does not shine here; there are but two pictures of his. Jan Steen has a great number of pictures, the most exquisite of which, if not of his whole works, is that of a baker, in his shirt, placing his hot loaves on the window of his shop, while the boy is blowing the horn to announce "hot rolls."

There are also in this collection several pictures by Teniers and Ostade; Sea-pieces, by Van de Velde and Backhuysen; Battle-pieces, by Wouvermans; Birds, Plants, and Insects, by Hondekoeter; Flowers and Fruits, by Huysum, Mignon, Van Os, and De Heem, besides many other pictures of great merit.

In the same building are deposited numerous antiquities and other curiosities; amongst them are two canes, which belonged to Admirals De Ruyter and Van Tromp, the chair occupied by Barneveldt when in prison, and a wooden ball, into which each of the confederate nobles drove a nail, as a token of fidelity to the league formed against the Duke of Alva. The whole is open to the public.

There are several literary institutions in Amsterdam, which are liberally supported. The Felix Meritis is the principal, and ranks amongst its members the most eminent literary and scientific men in Holland. Its object is, the promotion of the arts and sciences. The house in which its sittings are held, is situated in the Keyser's-graft, and contains a handsome concert-room, a theatre for the delivery of lectures, and a museum. There is also an Academy of Painting, Sculpture, Engraving, and Architecture.

At the Anatomical Theatre in the New Market, are preserved the skeletons of criminals who have been executed, and whose bodies have been sent here for dissection. They are dressed in the clothes they wore when living, and bear labels, stating what were the crimes for which they suffered.

At the southern extremity of the city, near the work-house, is the plantation, consisting of about a hundred acres, laid out in avenues at right angles with each other, interspersed with small villas and summer-houses, and the whole surrounded by canals. To this spot such of the citizens and their families repair in the summer, to dine or drink tea, whose finances or spirit of economy will not admit of their having a house in the country. To render these rural indulgences as cheap as possible, three or four families sometimes join in renting a small cottage, or summer-house and garden. Adjoining the plantation is a small botanic garden, but it possesses few rare or curious plants.

#### CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

AMSTERDAM abounds with institutions for the alleviation of human misery and distress in all their various shapes. There are not less than forty, and many of these are buildings of considerable size. Amongst them are nine hospitals and schools, for orphans, a lunatic asylum, and a founding hospital containing nearly three thousand children. In some of these establishments a very beneficial regulation is made. Not more than two or three regular nurses are kept; but the offices of kindness and attention to the sick, are discharged by those who are recovering. This saves expense, and they who have reaped the benefit of the institution, are enabled to repay the debt of gratitude in the most pleasing and efficient way. The first society for the restoration of drowned persons was formed in this city, in 1767, so that to the Dutch nation the English are indebted for those admirable institutions, by which so many of our countrymen have, at various times, been snatched from death, and restored to their families.

There are numerous schools in Amsterdam for the instruction of the children of the poor, who are admitted, under the direction of a certain number of managers, without distinction of religious sects. About four thousand children are thus educated.

#### DRESS OF THE INHABITANTS.

THE dress of the upper classes in Amsterdam, differs but little from that worn by persons of the same rank in other cities of Europe. The ladies imitate the Parisian fashions, but the tradesmen's wives and servants seldom wear any covering on their head, but a cap, during the summer. In winter they have long cloaks with hoods, which they draw on their heads, concealing the greater

part of the face. Some of the elderly gentlemen may still be seen dressed as in the days of Queen Elizabeth, with a large three-cornered hat, a bushy wig slightly powdered, a long-waisted coat with large-buttoned cuffs, a satin waistcoat with long flaps, knee and shoe buckles of massive silver, and a stout walking-cane mounted with gold; but the young men differ but little in dress from the English. The little round hat, the puckered jacket, and the capacious breeches, having entirely disappeared at Amsterdam, and being only visible in some of the remote parts of Holland.

#### GOVERNMENT.

THE government of Amsterdam is vested in a senate or council of thirty-six members, and twelve burgomasters. The members of the council sit during life, and fill up the vacancies that occur in their own numbers by their own suffrages. The burgomasters, who are chosen by the citizens, out of a double number first nominated by the council, sustain the active magistracy of the city in rotation; the government of each lasting only three months, and the four who are to preside during the year being annually appointed burgomasters regent, an office very similar to that of the Lord Mayor of London. These magistrates have the keys of the bank deposited with them. There is also a court of burgomasters which decides all criminal causes; but in civil causes there is an appeal to the provincial council. The senate of Amsterdam formerly appointed the deputies to the States General, in which this city only held the fifth rank, although it sent four representatives, or double the number of any other of the cities of Holland.

The police is under excellent regulations, and street-robberies and house-breaking are seldom heard of. The men employed as watchmen are stout and active, but can scarcely be justly denominated guardians of the peace and quiet of the inhabitants, as they spring their rattles every time they call out the hour of the night. Very few beggars are seen in the streets, and these are generally the aged and infirm.

Fires very seldom occur in Amsterdam. To guard against their spreading when they do, persons are appointed to stay all day and night in the towers of the highest churches, and as soon as they observe the flame, to hang out, if it be in the day, a flag; if in the night, a lantern: towards that quarter of the city in which it rises; and to accompany this by the blowing of a trumpet.

#### ENVIRONS.

THE country surrounding Amsterdam is low and marshy, but it consists of good pasturage, and abounds with peat, which is here used for fuel. When the peat is dug out, it is piled up about a foot or more in height, and when sufficiently dry, is cut into small pieces, and laid up in barns for sale. A great number of horned cattle are fed here, and the cows yield a large quantity of excellent milk.

In many places, the land is divided into *polders*. These are plots of ground enclosed by a bank of earth, and surrounded by a water-course, furnished with a flood-gate. The water is then pumped out of the enclosure by means of wind-mills, and the ground is thus drained. In consequence of the marshy nature of the soil, the atmosphere is heavy, and by no means healthy to those who have been accustomed to a dry air. The natives, however, experience no inconvenience from it.

#### BROEK.

ABOUT four or five miles from Amsterdam, is Broek or Broek, one of the most curious, and one of the prettiest villages in Holland. The streets are divided by little rivulets; the houses and summer-houses, formed of wood, painted green and white, though whimsical in their appearance, are all remarkably neat. They are like so many mausolea, for the silence of death reigns throughout the place. The inhabitants, who have formed a peculiar association among themselves, scarcely ever admit a stranger within their doors, and hold but little intercourse with each other. They are generally rich, and so attached to their homes, that during an inundation which took place a few years ago, and flooded the whole village, none of them could be induced to leave: they retreated to the upper floors, and received provisions in boats. The shutters of the windows in front, are generally kept closed, and

the principal door is never opened, except at a baptism, a marriage, or a death. Almost every house, also, has a family table, which is never used but on one of these occasions. The streets are paved in mosaic work, with various-coloured bricks, pebbles and cockleshells, and are kept with the greatest care. No carriages are allowed to pass along them, and it is said, that there was formerly a law, which obliged passengers to take off their shoes in summer, before they entered them. A man is said to have been reprimanded for sneezing in the streets, and a clergyman, who succeeded a very old predecessor, was treated with great shyness by his flock, because he omitted to take off his shoes when ascending the pulpit. The little yards in front of these singular houses, are covered with sand, laid out in festoons and various devices; and the gardens attached to them present some of the most grotesque ornaments: deer, dogs, peacocks, chairs, tables and ladders, being cut out of box, in endless profusion, whilst wooden swans and ducks, edge the small pieces of water with which the grounds are interspersed.

#### SAARDAM.

ANOTHER remarkable place in the vicinity of Amsterdam is Saardam, or Zaandam, celebrated as the village where Peter the Great worked as a shipwright. At a distance it appears a city of wind-mills, there being no less than four hundred saw, paper, tobacco, and corn mills, which add greatly to the wealth and prosperity of the place. There were formerly large magazines of timber, but no large ships are now built here, as the harbour has been long choked up with mud. The houses are principally built of wood. The principal street, or road, is about two miles long, and is bordered by a narrow canal, over which there are upwards of one hundred small bridges, forming the approaches to the houses, which are situated in small gardens on the opposite bank.

It was in 1696 that Peter the Great, under the name of Peter Michaeloff, presented himself at Saardam in the dress of a sailor, and entered the employ of one of the shipwrights. He worked for many weeks without any idea of his rank being entertained by his fellow-labourers; but when they discovered that he was the Czar of all the Russias, they wished to pay him suitable respect; this, however, he refused, and insisted that they should all work together on the same terms of familiarity as before. The use which he made of the knowledge he obtained, here and at Deptford, is well known.

The hut in which Peter resided has been carefully preserved in the same state, and, in 1823, was purchased by the Princess of Orange, the sister of the Emperor Alexander. By her direction a brick building has been erected over it, so as to preserve it from injury. The hut consists of two rooms on the ground-floor, above which is a loft

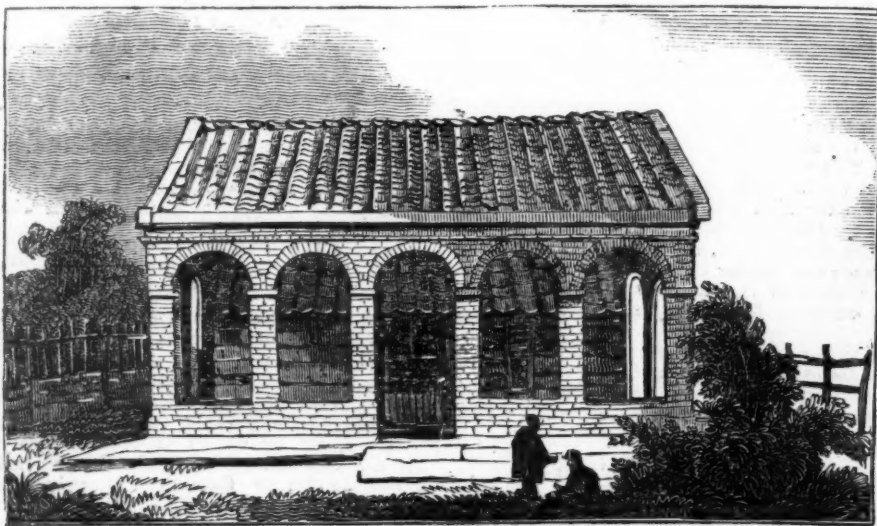
where Peter kept various specimens of boat-building. The sitting-room contains his oak table and three chairs, as well as the recess in which he slept. The walls are covered with the names of persons who have visited the spot, and there are several albums also, in which strangers have inserted their signatures. The Emperor Alexander visited the hut in 1814, and ordered two tablets to be put up in the lower room; one bears the words *Petro Magno, Alexander*; the other may be thus translated,—“Nothing is too little for a great man.”

#### DYKES.

THE road from Amsterdam to Saardam is made along one of those surprising efforts of human industry, termed a dyke, by means of which, the Dutch have been enabled to bar out the encroachments of the ocean. As the traveller passes along it, he sees, on one side, the land many yards below him, whilst on the other, the sea rises almost to a level with his feet. These dykes are of various heights and thickness according to their situation. They are formed with a slope on each side, and many of them are sufficiently wide at the top for two carriages to go along them. The side of the mound towards the sea, is ornamented and strengthened by a species of reed, which is carefully planted by the Hollanders in spring and autumn. This catching the sand which the tide drives against the dyke, it rapidly accumulates, and soon affords a thick covering for the original mound. There is sometimes a second dyke formed behind the first, so that should the water burst the outer one, the second may save the country from inundation, whilst the hollow between the two, serves as a canal to carry off the occasional floods. These dykes are kept in repair by the government, at an immense expense; but their maintenance is absolutely necessary to the preservation of the country, a considerable portion of Holland being below the level of the sea.

The poet Goldsmith alludes to these extraordinary works of the Hollanders, in the following beautiful lines.

METHINKS her patient sons before me stand,  
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,  
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,  
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.  
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,  
The firm-connected bulwark seems to go;  
Spreads its long arms against the watery roar,  
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore;  
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,  
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile;  
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,  
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,  
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,  
A new creation rescued from his reign.  
Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil,  
Impels the native to repeated toil;  
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,  
And industry begets a love of gain.



HOUSE OF PETER THE GREAT, AT SAARDAM.